

might be told in a simple and interesting way as tales of heroic men. Boys might absorb these as they would absorb stories of battles. Again, there are in nearly all towns various institutions for helping the children of the poorer classes to get more pleasure out of life. In London there is the Happy Evenings Association, the Children's Country Holiday Fund (18, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.), and a host of others. Many children, at the age when the money box craze has smitten them like an epidemic, save and collect money to send to these, and their interest gives an opportunity of explaining what such institutions do, the lives of the children who benefit by them, and why it is better to give pennies to them than to give them to a beggar in the street. Moreover, it is very sad how little the children of the upper classes know about the public buildings of the towns in which they live—the elementary schools and whom they educate, the public museums and art galleries, the town hall and guardians' offices, the parks that are "lungs of cities." Of course, children can't understand the detach of these things which are usually very dull. But one can arouse their curiosity, and make them feel that they are members of a community having a common life and common interests with the children who pour out from those monsters of red ugliness, the public schools, and the tired men and women on the benches in the parks.

These are one or two of the ways in which teachers could develop in children habits of social sympathy and brotherliness: others they will easily find for themselves.

POETRY CLUB NOTES.

October 4th.—After a short life of Mrs. Browning we read "The Cry of the Children," some of her shorter poems, and passages from "Aurora Leigh," which we much enjoyed.

Mrs. Browning was chosen for last term, but the last meeting was postponed.

The poets chosen for this term are D. G. Rossitti, Matthew Arnold, W. E. Henley, and Walt Whitman.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR EDITOR,

I wonder if any of the students know of the Holiday Courses held abroad every summer, at different centres, in connection with the Teachers' Guild.

One need not necessarily be a member of the Guild to join the Course, and a most delightful holiday, combining work and play, may be spent at a moderate cost. The first one I attended was at Honfleur, in Normandy, which is a delightful cycling district, and from where we cycled to Rouen, Caen, and other places of interest.

The following year I went to Tours, the centre of Touraine, and where the purest French is supposed to be spoken, and where we certainly made great strides in the language. The course lasts from three weeks to a month. Lectures and conversation classes are held in the morning, and the afternoons are devoted to excursions, &c.

Not more than two or three students board in the same family, so that one has the extra advantage of being obliged to speak French; and the French people lay themselves out to make the English comfortable in every way.

I shall be very pleased to give anyone fuller particulars if they would care for them.

Yours sincerely,

G. F.

c/o L. F. S. HORE, Esq.,

SANDY BAY,

HOBART,

TASMANIA,

July 22nd, 1907.

It is almost impossible to describe the Bush in Tasmania, and yet I should like to give you some idea of how lovely it is. Almost all the trees are gums—blue gums, peppermint gums, stringy bark, and so many more that I have not yet learned the names of. For miles and miles you see nothing but gum trees, while here and there rise up huge white trunks, with long, white arms out-stretched. These are ring barked, or dead trees; they give a weird look to the whole Bush, and in the twilight look like spectres.

It is in the early morning and the evening that the Bush looks its best. I go for a walk and often ride in the Bush

quite early, starting often at 4-30 a.m. Then it is quite glorious. There is a regular Bush smell—strong eucalyptus, specially strong in the early morning, and so good. There is not a sound to be heard, except sometimes the twittering of some early birds, or the rustle of some “creepie-crawlle” as it moves along.

With the sunrise appear the most wonderful colours, and the whole Bush seems transfigured—glorified, and almost at once every creature seems to awake, and there is such a chattering and calling amongst the birds, and such rustling and bustling among the beasts, and the wonderful, awesome silence is broken.

I could not describe the colours we see here, for they are too wonderful to put into words. Sometimes the whole sky—the hills, the Bush—everything is a deep, deep, deep purple, when suddenly that goes, and at once everything shines out in a new, lovely, soft, yellowish crimson, greenish, goldenish, brownish colour—such a colour as makes you wonder if its not all a dream; that changes, and in its place a blue—such an intense blue as you never see at home—takes its place.

Such glorious birds we see here, too! parrots, magpies, jackasses, wattle birds, robins, &c., in flocks. The parrots look beautiful flying about in the trees in the garden. The magpies are far more lovely than the English ones, pure black and white, and with such a sweet note.

The jackasses are great talkers and great snake killers. One day a whole flock of them attacked a snake at the end of the garden, and killed him, too.

The wattle birds are pretty, graceful things, but, unfortunately, are thought of as woodcock are at home. Its plumage is a pretty grey, with quaint, long, pointed feathers on the breast, tinted with a lovely, golden yellow. Can you imagine a bird with ear-rings on? The wattle bird wears a pair of long, pendant drops, shaded from deep amber to white, and perfectly lovely.

Our robins here are far more brilliantly beautiful than their English namesakes. Here robin's dress, worn with perfect taste, is of black, red and white. The black is shining jet, the red, fire, and the white, snow. On his tiny black velvet cap is a little white spot, a white bar across his wings, and his breast is a rosy, vivid scarlet. Can't you imagine what a darling he is?

Another lovely bird is the blue cap, or blue wren. The male, in the summer, wears a gorgeous gown of king-fisher blue, set off with black. After he has taken upon himself the care of a family, he puts on a more sober one of grey-brown.

I wish you could see the lovely firetailed finch, that we so often see flitting about in the Bush. It is a tiny bird, and looks more like a butterfly. It is grey or olive coloured, barred with a darker shade. On the head and wings is a little black, and the back, above the tail, is deep, fiery crimson.

There are so many beautiful animals to be seen here. I should like to have told you of them all, but it would take too long.

S. G. ADIE.

TEACHING NOTES.

I am not quite sure in what form you would like P.R.S. Notes for the “Pianta,” but if I tell you something of my own small experience, then you can use it or not as you like and how you like.

I have no very original or new ideas to offer. My pupils, a girl and boy, have just begun work in Class IV., and we are, of course, following the lines laid down in the programme. You ask specially for notes on any literary subject. I find history and literature practically become one subject, looked at from many points of view. History causes literature, or literature causes history, I am not sure which, but they certainly become inseparable in teaching.

For practical purposes I think it is enough to reserve a proper time for both subjects in the time-table, and to consider oneself free to substitute one subject for the other. We have so many books to study in these two subjects that one has to be careful to avoid the confusion which would certainly arise from starting all the books at once, and which is equally inevitable if the books are read through one by one.

Some of the books, especially in the literature programme, would lose half their value if they were not read systematically

from cover to cover; but I think others might be grouped as it were round a centre.

For these centres I should choose some of the great men or the leading questions of the day in the history period, and, taking each in turn, use all the books which bear upon it, whether they come under the heading of history or literature.

I am always rather glad when two authors differ as to the right and wrong of a question; it is not a bad thing for the children to see that two great authorities can yet hold different opinions.

For the same reason we have debates. Sometimes both children prepare the subject without knowing which side they will be called on to support, and sometimes I let them work up their own side particularly; but in that case they are warned that they will be wise to know something of their opponents probable lines of argument.

Our debates are, of course, very amateur, but we get a good deal of amusement out of them, and they are a very real incentive to preparation work.

We have two methods of reading poetry: first, and usually, with little or no comment; but if the poem is rather difficult, for example, the "Essay on Man," I give the children a short paragraph to put into their own words, insisting on the *full* meaning being brought out. So often a child is only too content with a vague idea of what the poet is driving at!

Yours truly,
L. M. GORE.

STUDENTS' MEETING.

A meeting will be held at the York Rooms on Saturday afternoon, November 2nd, at 3-30, which it is especially requested that ALL students will attend who can *possibly* do so, without waiting for special invitations. The Editor hopes to be present to discuss the working of the monthly "L' Umile Pianta," and to meet as many students as possible. The teaching of arithmetic will also be discussed.

YOUR PRESENCE IS EARNESTLY REQUESTED.

STUDENTS' LETTERS.

DEAR EX-STUDENTS,

It is difficult to write a joint letter to you as we are all so scattered. This year, however, our holiday posts are all in England or Wales, with the exception of one in Guernsey. The Juniors are still more scattered, many of those who have already been to France having gone to Germany.

Our "summer" term was disappointing this year, to say the least; we had only one solitary long half-holiday, so that half term was our only chance for long excursions. Three lucky ones, however, were out cycling near Hawkeshead one Saturday afternoon and found an owl's nest, and the owlets were so young that they were able to take them up and hold them in their hand without the little birds being really frightened.

This year some events of the Sports had to be taken on one day and some on another, and some even indoors, on account of the rain. We had a competition for the best Limerick to be written on the Sports as subject; the ideas were better than the manner in which they were expressed, generally speaking.

We had a most enjoyable visit from Mr. Thorneley, and were out with him for a whole day, which was wet of course, but we went round Rydal Mere and up to the Lower Easedale Valley. We found mountain everlasting (*antennaria dioica*), both female and male, in pink and in white. We found a great deal of the small water blinks (*montia fontana*), which is the only truly native member of *portulacæ*. Mr. Thorneley spent some time in the museum during his visit this time, as there has been a large collection of shells most kindly given. In fact the museum is growing quite perceptibly, and it has profited by the wet half-holiday evenings, by being well arranged with the specimens, as many as possible, rightly named. One poor stuffed owl had got into such a bad state that cremation had to end its days, and one or two wires and some ashes are all that now remains of him.

The museum's near neighbours, the bees, have caused much anxiety by refusing to swarm, and finally the queen bee's cell had to be cut out. Drone larvæ were taken out with it, and formed nice additions to Nature Note Book Paintings.

THE SENIORS.

SCALE HOW,
AMBLESIDE,

OCTOBER 16TH, 1907.

DEAR EX-STUDENTS,

We are very sorry that our last letter did not reach the "Pianta" in time.

You will all be glad to hear that Miss Mason came back from Germany very well indeed. She and Miss Kitching brought home a collection of picture post cards, which inspired in all the desire to visit some of the old German towns.

We have begun the last term of the year with plenty to do, as Mr. Perez is coming November 5th, and we are all in the throes of Final Crits.

The children in the Practising School are now only eleven in number; they have settled down to the term's work.

Class I. now has longer hours. The children stay till twelve o'clock in the morning, and come in the afternoon at 2-30 for an hour and a half.

Reading, writing, and number are to be taken three times a day, and each child is to be taken separately for ten minutes a time. Their number is taken as in A.B.C. Part I., omitting counting by staves and cubes, &c. Classes II., III., and IV. use Longman Arithmetic according to the programme. The children work as much as possible alone, but when difficulties arise, or their methods need revising, or if a new rule is to be taken, the teacher explains and works with them upon the blackboard. Graphs have not been taken. The babies are starting the new handicraft rafia work.

We have had the first of a course of First Aid Lectures from Dr. Allen, and these will be most interesting, especially as he is going to demonstrate next time. The Juniors have started Botany with Mr. Martindale, going down to the Technical Schools as usual every Wednesday.

There are two courses of lectures this term, the first being the Oxford Extension Lectures upon the influence of Greece. The lecturer is evidently much interested in his subject, and having been to Greece, is more able to make his lectures living. Miss Mason is particularly anxious that we should all attend these lectures, as she thinks they will help us in taking the papers upon the British Museum with the children. There are picture post cards published of most

of the things described in these papers which she would like used as illustrations.

The other course is upon various subjects, such as Geology of the Lake District, a lecture on birds by Kearton, &c.

One Tuesday this term we had a new kind of Drawing-room evening. Everybody wrote an essay on any person or thing in which she was interested during the holidays, and on Tuesday each student read her own essay, and we voted for the best. The prize was "Der Gelehrte" by Rembrandt.

This week the essay is to be a tale of a haunted house. The subject was suggested to Miss Mason during dinner, when we were startled by most mysterious sounds beneath the dining-room. These sounds came from the cellar, where workmen are engaged in laying hot water pipes which will be carried through the pantry and into the classroom, the radiators taking the place of the old oil stoves. The classroom is now as light by night as by day. Instead of the lamp that used to hang from the ceiling we have two incandescent gas lights.

We have not begun hockey yet as there has been some trouble about a field; however, it is now settled that we are to have the old field on the Rydal road.

THE SENIOR STUDENTS.

NOTES ON CRITICISM LESSONS.

After a recitation lesson given to Class I., Miss Mason said she thought it would be a great help sometimes to make the children feel the metre of the poetry. She taught the children one verse, letting them mark off the feet on their fingers, and showing them how they must say just the right words to fit in, she introduced the name foot. She expressed a wish for us to try how that method answered.

In grammar Miss Mason laid great stress on the importance of having each point thoroughly well known. In speaking of the teacher, she compared her to a terrier worrying a rag.

Science must be taken very thoroughly. Every paragraph or passage should be narrated directly it is read, and at the end a general narration. In botany, specimens should be thoroughly examined with a lens and compared with illustrations given in the text-book.